


Let's Get Cooking

Step by Step Guide for Volunteers or Teachers to Participate

Advanced planning and organization is key to an engaging learning experience with food. Be mindful that the success rides on children keeping busy and having enough to do from start to finish.

One Month in Advance

1. Use the 4 "E"s to plan your cooking session:

 **Explore** - Give kids time to check out the colors, shapes, texture, smell of the ingredients in the recipe
Experience - Let each child participate step-by-step, working with each ingredient in the recipe to understand the concept from A-Z

Experiment - Offer opportunities to taste-test veggies raw (where appropriate); compare flavor profile (sweetness, sour, saltiness etc)

Enjoy - Devise strategies so children associate fun with cooking

2. Choose the seasonal fruits & vegetables you will introduce. Here's a great starter guide from [Jamie Oliver Food Foundation](#)

3. Select a recipe using the following criteria:

- you are confident to prepare it yourself
- it can be prepared in the timeframe allotted
- the cost fits within your budget
- you have the equipment resources and it's feasible in the space designated

4. Invite parents/volunteers to help you - a typical classroom has 20-30 students. Every child should participate. Plan for groups of 10 with an adult. For classroom of 30, you take one group of 10 and 2 other adults each lead additional groups of 10.

One Week in Advance

1. **Calculate ingredient & equipment list** based on number of times you need to multiply the recipe to serve all the children. Guide: most recipes serve 4-6 persons or about 10 tasting portions; plan to make one recipe per cooking group of up to 10 students.
2. **Add a plastic plate and knife for each child to your list** - this will serve as their knife and cutting board. Prioritize better quality if possible so it can be re-used by the teacher for future cooking exploration

1-3 Days in Advance

1. **Shop strategically** -- buy non-perishables first; shop for produce at farmers market if possible
2. **Scrub all the produce well in advance** - schools don't have great sinks.

1 Hour in Advance

1. **Prepare 2-3 workstations for students to cook plus a prep table** - move desks around in the classroom or secure a science lab with work tables
2. **Select 2 children from each cooking group to help you prep and be your sous chefs**
3. **Have all children wash their hands thoroughly** - explain they should avoid touching their face/hair before and during cooking
4. **Pre-slice most of the produce at each table** - slices will be further chopped by each child; leave one whole vegetable of each type to pass around for exploration
5. **Place a plastic plate and knife around the table for each student**

Leading the Cooking Class

1. **Explore** - Introduce the recipe and ingredients to the class; pass out the whole vegetables for exploration
2. **Experience** - Follow the recipe steps, passing out a slice of each ingredient in succession for children to dice, mince, etc. according to the recipe. For ingredients needing grating, have each child grate 3 strokes with all students counting out loud 1, 2, 3 and then passing to the next child. Everyone gets a turn!
3. **Experiment** - Pass out an extra slice for less familiar veggies so they can take a taste; discuss and compare and use colorful language to describe the experience
4. **Enjoy** - When it's time to dish out the recipe, clean off the table, add a chair for yourself and sit down and enjoy together. Discuss what they like, what surprised them and what they have learned in the session to take into their daily life.



From the team behind 18 years of classroom and after school hands on cooking/nutrition education for Pre-k to 12 at FamilyCook Productions, comes a step-by-step guide for the most novice food educator! Mercedes Sanchez, MS, RD and Lynn Fredericks are also authors of the just-released **Get Your Family Eating Right!** www.familycookproductions.com